

Tim and the Hidden People

# Magic in The Yard

Sheila K. McCullagh

Illustrated by Pat Cook





# Magic in The Yard



Sheila K. McCullagh

Illustrated by Pat Cook

© SHEILA K. McCULLAGH. 1974.

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Copyright owner.

0 560 01326 4



E. J. ARNOLD & SON LIMITED LEEDS

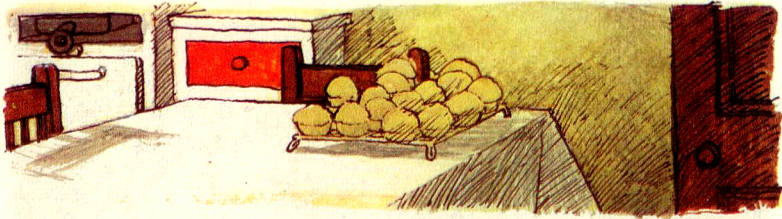




Aunt May was baking cakes. There was a rich, warm smell coming from the kitchen. Tim looked in, just as Aunt May was taking the cakes out of the oven.

She picked up a wire tray, and piled the cakes on it.





She saw Tim looking round the door.

"Miss Miff is coming to tea, Tim," she said. "I'll take your tea upstairs. You remember what happened last time."

Tim did remember. He had bumped into Miss Miff's tea-cup, and spilt tea all over her. She had been very cross.

"All right," he said. "Can I have some cakes?"

"You can have some later," said Aunt May. "These are for Miss Miff."

"But she'll eat them all," said Tim. "She always does. It's not fair."

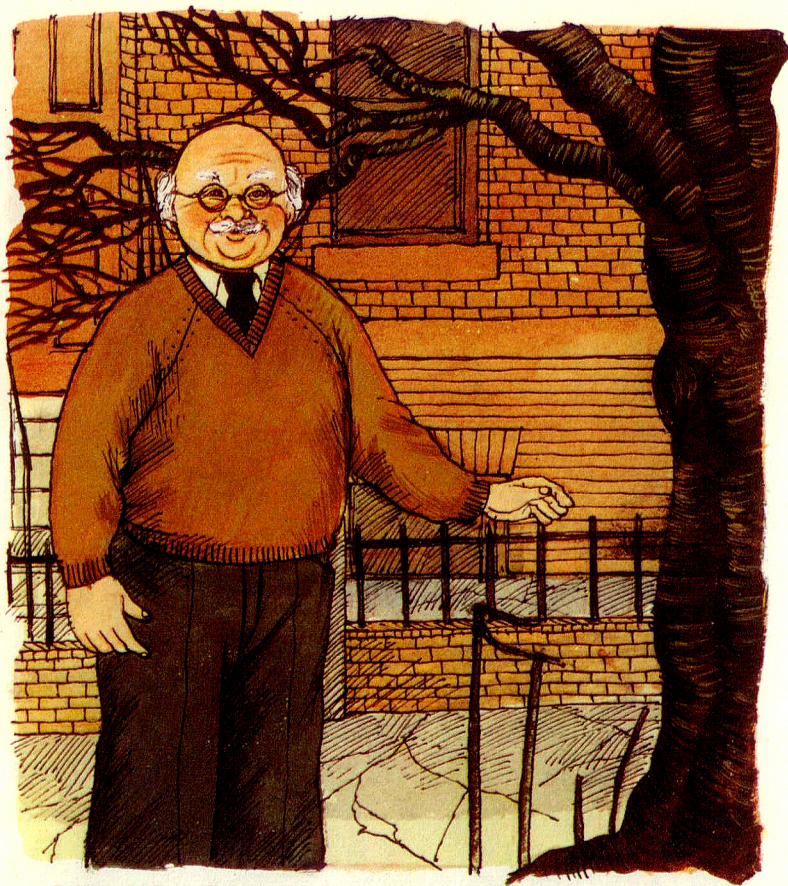
Miss Miff was very small and thin, but both Tim and Aunt May knew how much she ate.

"You won't have any at all, if you talk like that," said Aunt May. She was hot and bothered with the baking, and the fact that she was a bit late.

"You'd better go out and play, and get out of my way," she said.

Tim took his ball, and went out into The Yard.





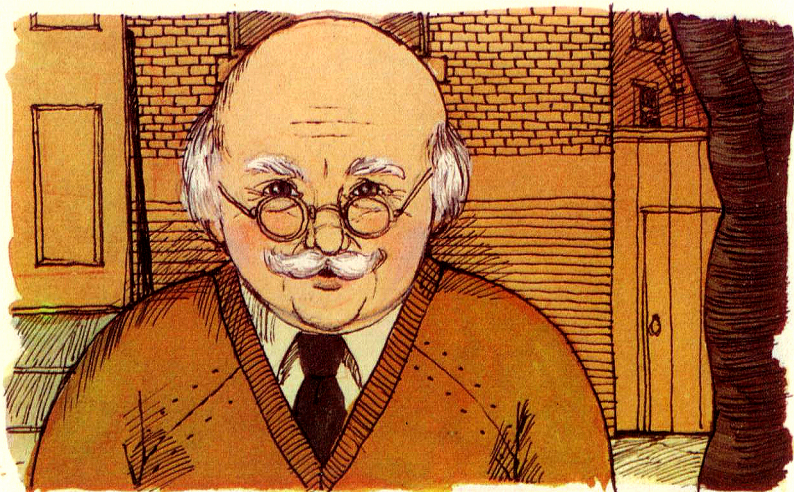
Old Mr. Berryman was standing under the tree.

“Hallo, Tim,” he called, as Tim came out.

“Hallo, Mr. Berryman,” said Tim. “How’s Sebastian?”

“That cat is just fine,” said Mr. Berryman. “He grows a bit every day.”





Mr. Berryman looked down at Tim over the top of his glasses.

“How are you, Tim?” he said.

“All right,” said Tim. He liked Mr. Berryman.

“You don’t look it,” said Mr. Berryman. “You look as if you hadn’t slept for a week.”

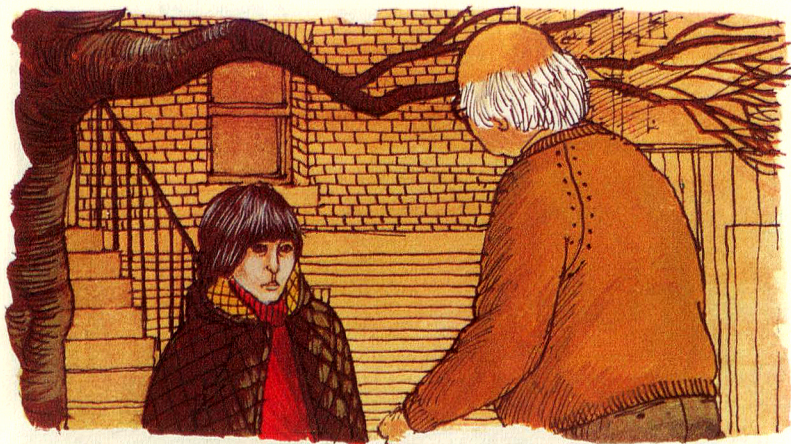
Tim looked up at him quickly.

Mr. Berryman’s eyes were very blue and very bright.

“You remind me of my brother, when he was just about your age,” Mr. Berryman said. “He had just that strange, far away look that you’ve got, after he found the key.”

“The key?” asked Tim quickly. His hands were in his pockets, and his fingers were on the old key he had found in the attic.





“Yes,” said Mr. Berryman. “Didn’t I tell you that story? He found an old key somewhere in the house, and after that he began to meet all kinds of strange people.”

“What happened?” asked Tim.

“Well, he went along with them for a bit,” said Mr. Berryman. “But then he began to think they were up to no good. So he threw the key away, and that was the end of them. I was glad when he threw it away. He looked just the way you do – as if he hadn’t slept for a week.”

“I’m all right,” said Tim.

Mr. Berryman shook his head, but he didn’t say any more about Tim’s looks. That was one of the best things about Mr. Berryman. He always knew when you didn’t want him to ask questions.





Mr. Berryman looked across at the empty house in the corner of the square.

"It's a pity to see that house standing empty," he said. "I'd like to see a family move in."

Tim nodded, but he said nothing.

He was thinking about Sebastian, and that made him think about Tobias, too.

Mr. Berryman looked up at the old tree in the middle of The Yard. "That's a fine old tree," he said. "But it won't last much longer."





There was a long, low whistle from the garden of the empty house.

Tim looked towards it quickly.

“Did you hear anything?” he asked Mr. Berryman.

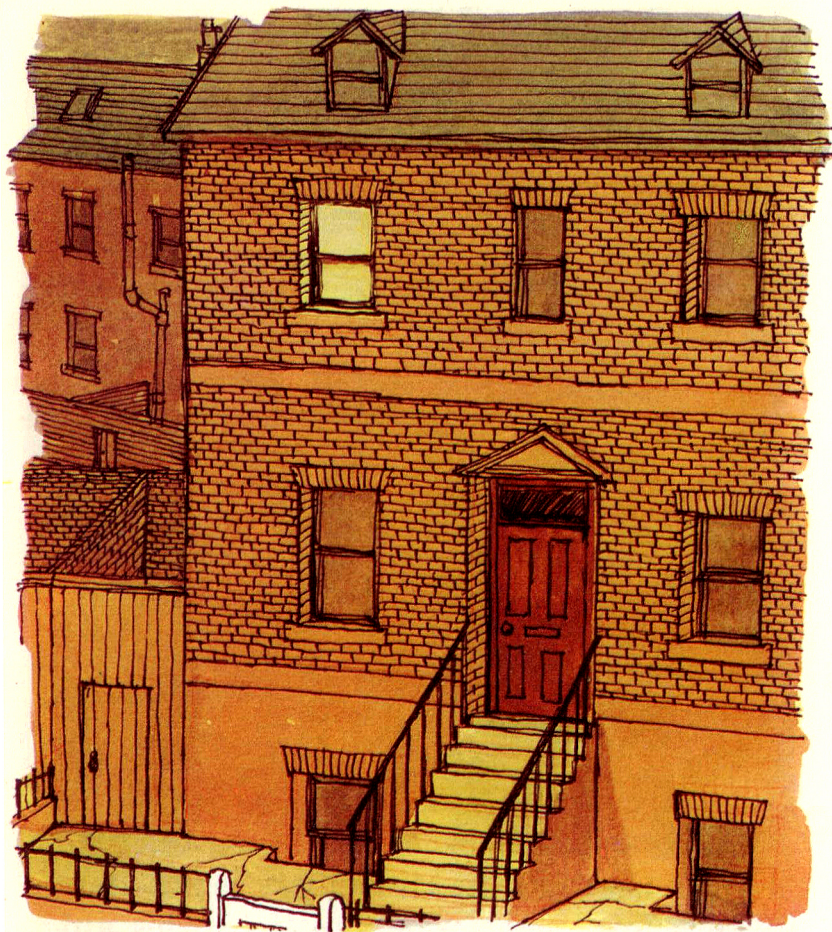
Mr. Berryman shook his head. “I can hear the wind,” he said slowly. “You’d better go in soon, Tim, and get to bed. You don’t look well to me.”

He nodded to Tim, and went off towards his own gate.

Tim kicked his ball slowly around The Yard. The sun was beginning to set, and the empty house in the corner was in shadow. Tim kicked the ball past the gate. He stopped. He had a strange feeling that someone was watching him.

Tim turned quickly towards the house.



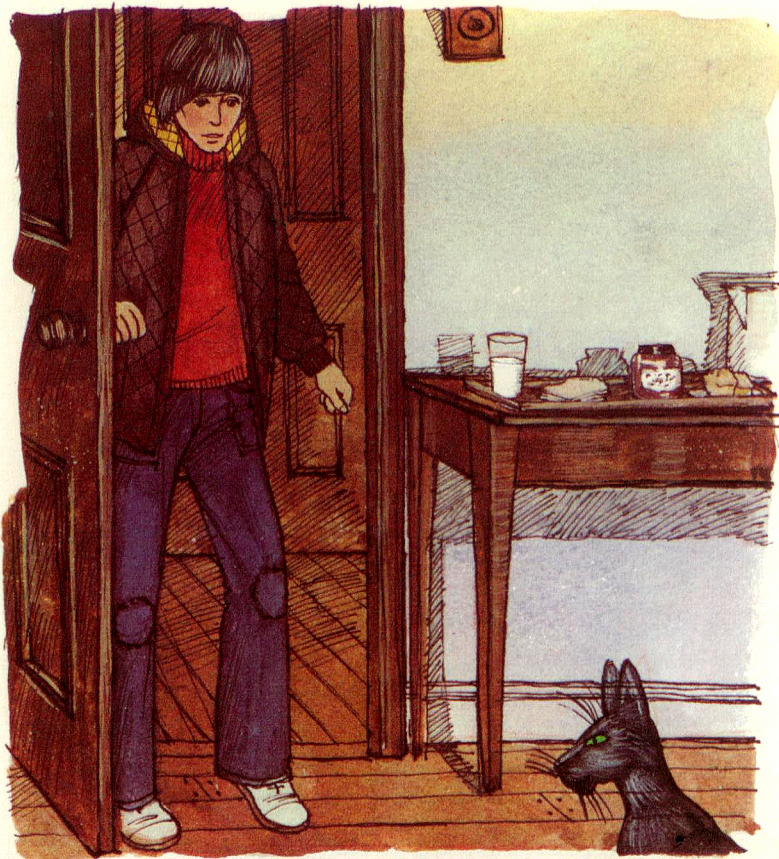


A light shone for a second in a window upstairs,  
and went out.

A cold wind blew across The Yard.

Tim shivered. He gave the ball a hard kick,  
and ran after it towards his own gate.

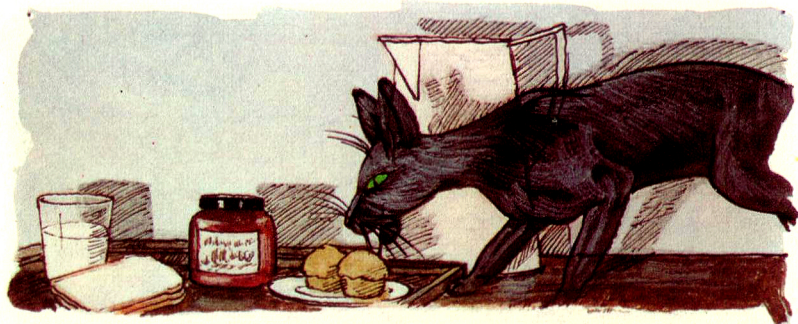




Tim knew that Miss Miff must be in the kitchen by this time, so he went upstairs to his attic.

He opened the door, and saw Tobias sitting in the middle of the room.

Some bread and butter and jam were on a tray on the table, with a glass of milk, and there was a plate with two little cakes on it.



“Hallo, Tim,” said Tobias. “Have a cake.”  
He jumped up on to the table, and began to eat one.

Tim took the other.

“Aunt May makes good cakes,” he said, as he bit it. “But I didn’t think she’d bring any up with my tea.”

“She didn’t,” said Tobias. He grinned.

Tim stopped eating.

“You didn’t steal them?” he said.

“No, I didn’t steal them,” said Tobias. “I took them from the kitchen, but I left two other cakes on the dish – cakes I had made myself. Magic cakes. You didn’t know I could make cakes, Tim, did you?”

Tobias was shaking with laughter.

“You should have looked in the kitchen, Tim, as you came by.”

“You didn’t *poison* them did you?” cried Tim.





He dropped the cake and ran to the door.  
He half-fell, half-jumped down the stairs,  
two steps at a time.

He could hear cries for help coming from  
the kitchen.

He got to the kitchen door, and tore it open.

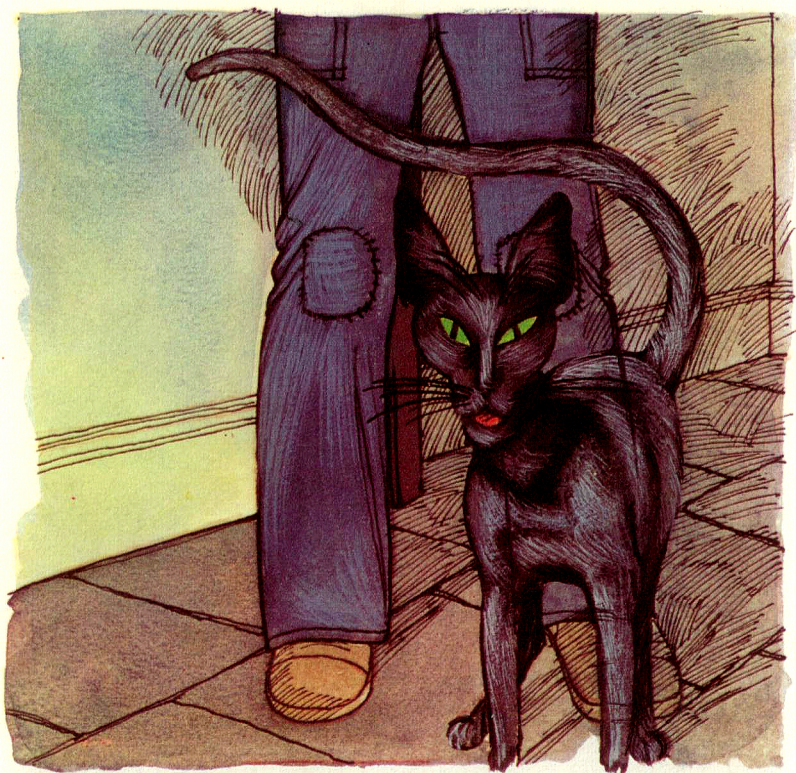


Aunt May and Miss Miff were not sitting at the tea-table. They were floating against the ceiling.

“Tim,” cried Aunt May, looking down. “Help, Tim! Get me down.”

“Get a policeman!” cried Miss Miff. “Get the fire-brigade! I’ve been poisoned!”





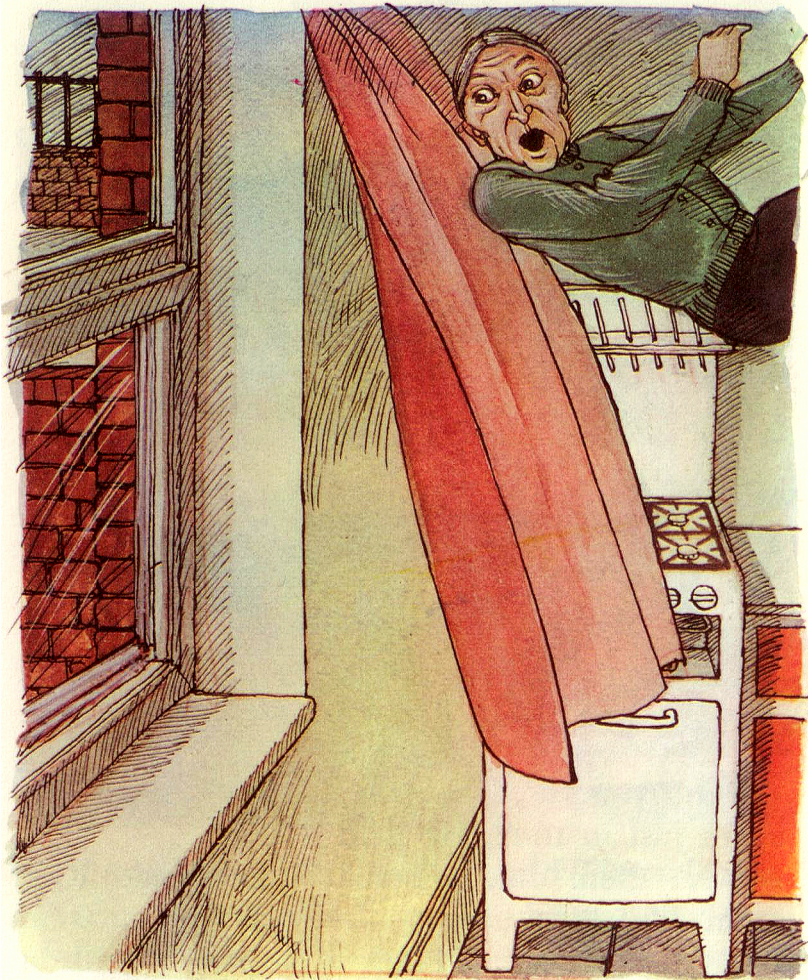
Tim heard a laugh at his feet. It was a wicked laugh. He looked down. Tobias had followed him into the kitchen.

His eyes were green and bright, and his tail was twitching. Tobias laughed again, and Tim didn't like the sound of his laugh at all.

"Open the window, Tim!" said Tobias. "Let them float away!"

"You've got to get them down!" cried Tim.





Tobias' eyes flashed.  
He twitched his tail, and the window fell  
open with a bang.  
Miss Miff floated towards it.





Tim ran to the window and pushed it up again just in time. He held it shut.

“Get them down, Tobias!” he cried. “Get them down!”

Tobias’ eyes went black.

“Remember Sebastian,” he said. “Sebastian’s only a little kitten. I told you, he’s the son of a friend of mine. That woman, Miss Miff – she was going to drown Sebastian in the canal.”



“I know, Tobias, I know,” said Tim. He was holding up the window, but the window was pushing down on his hands, and he knew that he couldn’t hold it much longer. “But Sebastian’s all right now, Tobias. You know he is. He’s living with Mr. Berryman. You can’t let them float away.”





“Yes, I can,” said Tobias. “You saved Sebastian. She would have drowned him.”

“But Aunt May didn’t hurt Sebastian,” gasped Tim. His arms felt as if they would drop. “You can’t let Aunt May float away too.”

The window dropped down a foot.

“Help!” cried Aunt May, as she floated towards it. “Help me, Tim!”



Tim was fighting to push the window up again.

Tobias' eyes were bright green, and his tail was twitching.

"*Please, Tobias!*" Tim gasped. "*Please! I did save Sebastian for you. Please stop.*"





The window was suddenly loose in Tim's hands.

He gave it a last push, and it slammed shut. He shot the catch across. The catch held.



Tim turned around. Tobias had dropped his tail, and was standing watching.

Aunt May and Miss Miff began to sink back towards the floor again.

Tobias ran to the door.

"Come on, Tim," he said. "They're coming down."

He sounded friendly again.





Tim took a last look at Aunt May and Miss Miff. They were floating gently to the ground. They both looked as if they were half asleep. He slipped out of the kitchen after Tobias, and shut the door behind him.

Tobias was going up the stairs, and Tim followed him.

"What will they do now, Tobias?" he asked. "Were you invisible? Did they see you?"

"No, they didn't see me," Tobias said. "And they won't do anything. They'll forget all about it. I put some forgetting-mixture in the cakes. But I gave that woman a real fright just the same. She'll dream about it tonight."

He sounded pleased with himself.

Tim didn't say any more until they got upstairs.



They went into Tim's room at the top of the house.

Tim lit a candle. He never tried to switch the light on now, when Tobias was there. He knew it wouldn't work.

Tobias jumped up on the bed.

"Well, Tim, are you coming for a ride?" he asked. "I've got a broomstick at the window."

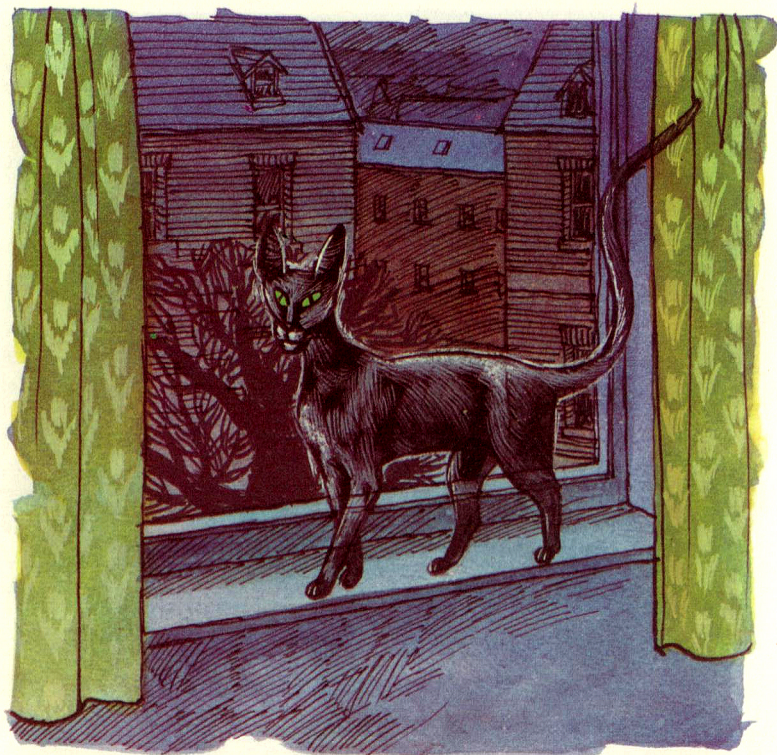
"I've got something to tell you," said Tim. "I – I think I saw the Highwayman."

Tobias stood still.

"Where?" he asked quickly.

"On the path by the canal – on the way to Hollow Hill," said Tim.





Tobias jumped down and ran to the window.

"I'm off, Tim," he said. "No rides for you tonight. I'm off to see the Hidden People."

"But the Highwayman is one of the Hidden People, isn't he?" asked Tim.

"So are a lot of other people," said Tobias. "There are some Hidden People you want to know – and some you want to keep away from. I'll see you another night, Tim. I'm off."



The window opened by itself. The wind blew the curtains, and the candle went out. Tobias jumped on to the sill outside.

Tim ran over to the window. He was just in time to see Tobias riding over The Yard on his broomstick.

The broomstick lifted up over the roofs.  
Tobias was gone.





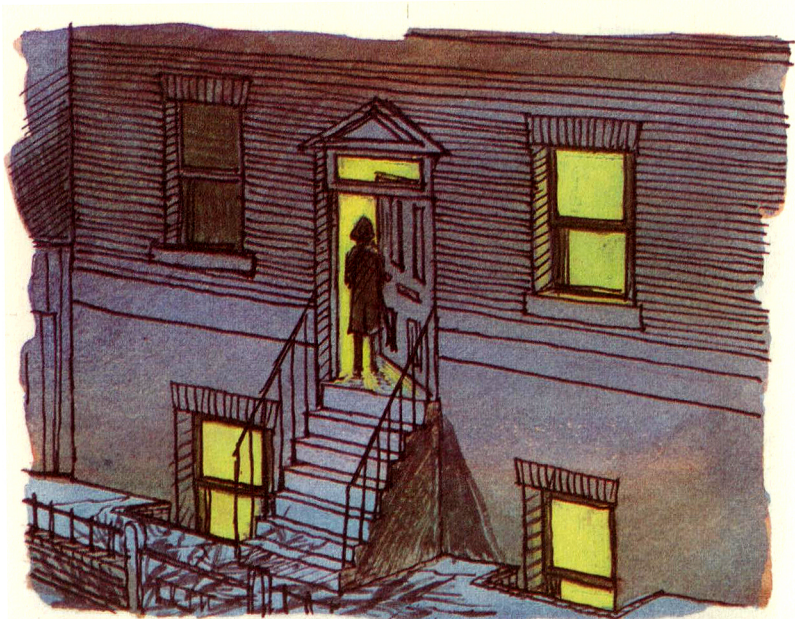
Tim looked down into The Yard.

It was dark now. The street light was on, and the shadow of the old tree danced in the wind.

A man came into The Yard.

Tim had just time to see that he was wearing a three-cornered hat, when the street lamp went out.

“Is it – is it Captain Jory?” Tim said to himself. He couldn’t be sure.



The wind blew the clouds away from the moon, and for a moment The Yard below was bright in the moonlight. There were lights in the windows of the empty house. The shadow of the tree fell across the gate.

The man crossed The Yard below. The door in the empty house opened, and the man went inside.

Then the door shut again.

A cloud blew across the moon.

The lights in the house went out. The Yard below was dark and empty.

Tim shivered. It was cold.





He went over to the door, and tried the switch. The light went on.

Tim looked across at the window. There was a gap in the curtains, and the night outside seemed even blacker than before.

He pulled the curtains to.



Suddenly, he remembered Aunt May.

He opened the door of his room, and listened. He could hear Miss Miff and Aunt May talking below. Miss Miff was saying "Good-bye." He heard her go into her room and shut the door.

Tim ran downstairs.





“Hallo, Tim,” said Aunt May, as he went into the kitchen. “She’s gone.”

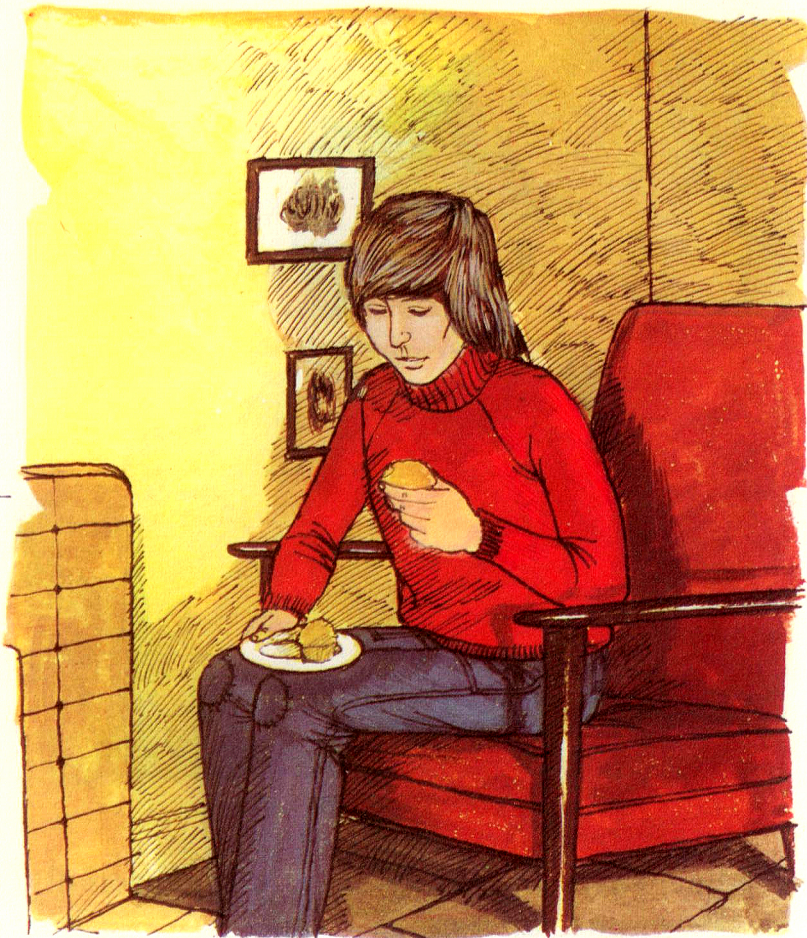
Aunt May was clearing away the tea things.

“Yes, I know,” said Tim. “I heard her go.”

“She’s a funny woman,” said Aunt May. “She went to sleep by the fire. A good thing, too. She talks too much.”

“Did she eat her tea?” asked Tim.

“Yes, she did,” said Aunt May. “She ate everything in sight. She always does. But I put a cake or two away for you before she came.”



Aunt May went over to a cupboard, and took out a plate with two cakes on it.

“Here you are, Tim,” she said.

Tim took the cakes, and sat down by the stove. The kitchen seemed warm and friendly.





He ate the cakes slowly.

Aunt May moved about, talking cheerfully as she washed up the tea things.

“I think I must have dropped off myself,” said Aunt May, “It’s been a funny day. I had a dream – but I can’t remember it.”

She laughed. “Miss Miff and I – we must have looked silly, sitting in here, fast asleep!”

Printed in England by J. Howitt & Son Ltd., Nottingham



